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**TRANSLATION**  
OF AN  
**ABRIDGMENT OF THE VEDANT,**

OR,  
**Resolution of all the Veds;**

THE  
MOST CELEBRATED AND REVERED WORK OF BRAHMINICAL THEOLOGY :

LIKEWISE  
A TRANSLATION  
OF THE  
**CENA UPANISHAD,**

One of the Chapters of the Sama Veda;

ACCORDING TO THE GLOSS OF THE CELEBRATED SHANCARACHARYA,

ESTABLISHING  
THE UNITY AND THE SOLE OMNIPOTENCE OF THE  
**Supreme Being;**

AND THAT HE ALONE IS THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP.

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By **RAMMOHUN ROY.**

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**LONDON:**  
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1817.

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RAM MOHAN RAI

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## TO THE PUBLIC.

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THE following Tracts, by a native of Hindoostan, on the subject of the Hindoo religion, (which I have lately received from India) not having been published in England, I conceive that I should not be rendering an unacceptable service to the public, by making them acquainted with so curious and novel a production, and at the same time in some degree with the character of the author, RAMMOHUN ROY. He is by birth a Brahmin, of very respectable origin, in the Province of Bengal, about forty-three years of age.

His acquirements are considerable: to a thorough knowledge of the Sungscrit (the language of the Brahminical Scriptures) he has added Persian and Arabic; and possessing an acute understanding, he early conceived a contempt for the religious prejudices and absurd superstitions of his cast.

At the age of twenty-two, he commenced the study of the English language, which not pursuing with application, he five years afterwards when I became acquainted with him, could merely speak it well enough to be understood upon the most common topics of discourse; but could not write it with any degree of correctness. He was afterwards employed as Dewan, or principal native officer, in the collection of the revenues, in the district of which I was for five years collector in the East India Company's Civil Service. By



perusing all my public correspondence with diligence and attention, as well as by corresponding and conversing with European gentlemen, he acquired so correct a knowledge of the English language, as to be enabled to write and speak it with considerable accuracy. He was also in the constant habit of reading the English newspapers, of which the continental politics chiefly interested him, and from thence he formed a high admiration of the talents and prowess of the late ruler of France, and was so dazzled with the splendour of his achievements, as to become sceptical, as to the commission, if not blind to the atrocity, of his crimes, and could not help deeply lamenting his downfall, notwithstanding the profound respect he ever professed for the English nation; but when the first transports of his sorrow had subsided, he considered, that part of his political conduct which led to his abdication, to have been so weak and so madly ambitious, that he declared his future detestation of Buonaparte would be proportionate to his former admiration of him.

In a letter I have lately received from him intimately connected with the subject before me, he says, "I take this opportunity of giving you a summary account of my proceedings since the period of your departure from India.

"The consequence of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been, that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and better adapted for the use



of rational beings, than any others which have come to my knowledge; and have also found Hindoos in general more superstitious and miserable, both in performance of their religious rites, and in their domestic concerns, than the rest of the known nations on the Earth: I therefore, with a view of making them happy and comfortable both here and hereafter, not only employed verbal arguments against the absurdities of the idolatry practised by them, but also translated their most revered theological work, namely Vedant, into Bengallee and Hindoostanee, and also several chapters of the Ved, in order to convince them, that the unity of God, and absurdity of idolatry, are evidently pointed out by their own scriptures. I however, in the beginning of my pursuits, met with the greatest opposition from their self-interested leaders, the Brahmins, and was deserted by my nearest relations; I consequently felt extremely melancholy; in that critical situation, the only comfort that I had, was the consoling and rational conversation of my European friends, especially those of Scotland and England.

“ I now with the greatest pleasure inform you, that several of my countrymen have risen superior to their prejudices; many are inclined to seek for the truth; and a great number of those who dissented from me, have now coincided with me in opinion. This engagement has prevented me from proceeding to Europe as soon as I could wish; but you may depend upon my setting off for England within a short period of time: and if you do not return to India before October next, you will most probably receive a letter from me,

informing you of the exact time of my departure for England, and of the name of the vessel on which I shall embark."

This extract, which is made without alteration, will shew how well the writer has overcome the difficulties of the English language.

THE EDITOR.

*John Digby*





TO THE

## Believers of the only true God.



THE greater part of Brahmins, as well as of other sects of Hindoos, are quite incapable of justifying that idolatry, which they continue to practise. When questioned on the subject, in place of adducing reasonable arguments in support of their conduct, they conceive it fully sufficient to quote their ancestors as positive authorities! And some of them are become very ill disposed towards me, because I have forsaken Idolatry, for the worship of the true and eternal God! In order, therefore, to vindicate my own faith, and that of our early forefathers, I have been endeavouring, for some time past, to convince my countrymen of the true meaning of our sacred books; and to prove, that my aberration deserves not the opprobrium, which some unreflecting persons have been so ready to throw upon me.

The whole body of the Hindoo Theology, Law, and Literature, is contained in the Veds, which are affirmed to be coëval with the creation! These works are extremely voluminous; and being written in the most elevated and metaphorical style, are, as may be well supposed, in many passages seemingly confused and contradictory. Upwards of two thousand years ago, the great Byas, reflecting on the perpetual difficulty arising from these sources, composed with great discrimination a complete and compendious abstract of the whole; and also reconciled those texts, which appeared to stand at variance. This work he termed *The Vedant*, which, compounded of two Sungscrit



words, signifies *The resolution of all the Veds*. It has continued to be most highly revered by all the Hindoos; and in place of the more diffuse arguments of the Veds, is always referred to as equal authority. But, from its being concealed within the dark curtain of the Sungscrit language, and the Brahmins permitting themselves alone to interpret, or even to touch any book of the kind, the Vedant, although perpetually quoted, is little known to the public: and the practice of few Hindoos indeed bears the least accordance with its precepts!

In pursuance of my vindication, I have, to the best of my abilities, translated this hitherto unknown work, as well as an abridgment thereof, into the Hindoostanee and Bengalee languages; and distributed them, free of cost, among my own countrymen, as widely as circumstances have possibly allowed. The present is an endeavour to render an abridgment of the same into English, by which I expect to prove to my European friends, that the superstitious practices, which deform the Hindoo religion, having nothing to do with the pure spirit of its dictates!

I have observed, that, both in their writings and conversation, many Europeans feel a wish to palliate, and soften the features of Hindoo Idolatry; and are inclined to inculcate, that all objects of worship are considered by their votaries, as emblematical representations of the Supreme Divinity!—If this were indeed the case, I might perhaps be led into some examination of the subject; but the truth is, the Hindoos of the present day have no such views of the subject; but firmly believe in the real existence of innumerable Gods and Goddesses, who possess, in their own departments, full and independent power; and to propitiate them, and not the true God, are Temples erected, and ceremonies performed. There can be no doubt, however, and it is my whole design to prove, that every rite has its



derivation from the allegorical adoration of the true Deity; but, at the present day, all this is forgotten; and among many it is even heresy to mention it!

I hope it will not be presumed, that I intend to establish the preference of my faith, over that of other men. The result of controversy on such a subject, however multiplied, must be ever unsatisfactory. For, the reasoning faculty, which leads men to certainty in things within its reach, produces no effect on questions beyond its comprehension. I do no more than assert, that, if correct reasoning, and the dictates of common sense, induce the belief of a wise, uncreated Being, who is the supporter and ruler of the boundless universe; we should also consider him the most powerful and supreme existence;—far surpassing our powers of comprehension, or description!—And, although men of uncultivated minds, and even some learned individuals, (but in this one point blinded by prejudice,) readily choose, as the object of their adoration, any thing which they can always see, and which they pretend to feed; the absurdity of such conduct is not thereby in the least degree diminished.

My constant reflections on the inconvenient, or rather injurious rites, introduced by the peculiar practice of Hindoo Idolatry, which, more than any other Pagan worship, destroys the texture of society; together with compassion for my Countrymen, have compelled me to use every possible effort, to awaken them from their dream of error: and by making them acquainted with their scriptures, enable them to contemplate, with true devotion, the unity and omnipresence of nature's God.

By taking the path, which conscience and sincerity direct, I, born a Brahmun, have exposed myself to the complainings and reproaches, even of some of my relations, whose prejudices are strong, and



whose temporal advantage depends upon the present system. But these, however accumulated, I can tranquilly bear; trusting that a day will arrive, when my humble endeavours will be viewed with justice—perhaps acknowledged with gratitude. At any rate, whatever men may say, I cannot be deprived of this consolation: my motives are acceptable to that Being, who beholds in secret, and compensates <sup>only</sup> ~~openly~~!





# TRANSLATION

OF

## AN ABRIDGMENT OF THE

### Vedant.

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THE illustrious Byas,\* in his celebrated work, the Vedant, insinuates in the first text, that it is absolutely necessary for mankind to acquire knowledge respecting the Supreme Being, who is the subject of discourse in all the Veds, and the Vedant, as well as in the other Systems of Theology. But, he found, from the following passages of the Veds, that this inquiry is limited to very narrow bounds: viz. †“The Supreme being is not comprehensible by vision, or by any other of the organs of sense; nor can he be conceived by means of devotion, or virtuous practices!” “He sees every thing, though never seen: hears every thing, though never directly heard of! He is neither short, nor is he long;‡ § inaccessible to the reasoning faculty; not to be compassed by description; beyond the limits of the explanation of the Ved, or of human conception!” Byas, also, from the result of various arguments coinciding with the Ved, found, that the accurate and positive knowledge of the Supreme Being, is not within the boundary of comprehension: i. e. that *what*, and *how*, the Supreme Being is, cannot be definitely ascertained. He has, therefore, in the

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\* The greatest of the Indian Theologists, Philosophers, and Poets, was begotten by the celebrated Purasur and Sutyubutee: Byas collected and divided the Veds into certain Books and Chapters, he is therefore commonly called Vedu Byas; the word Byas is composed of the preposition *bi* and the verb *uss* to divide.

† Munduc.

‡ Brih'darunnue.

§ Cuthubulli.



second text, explained the Supreme Being by his effects and works, without attempting to define his essence; in like manner as we, not knowing the real nature of the Sun, explain him to be the cause of the succession of days and epochs. “He, by whom the birth, existence, and annihilation of the world is regulated, is the Supreme Being!” We see the multifarious, wonderful universe, as well as the birth, existence, and annihilation, of its different parts; hence, we naturally infer the existence of a being, who regulates the whole, and call him the Supreme: in the same manner as from the sight of a pot, we conclude the existence of its artificer. The Ved in like manner declares the Supreme Being thus, \* “He from whom the universal world proceeds, who is the Lord of the Universe, and he whose work is the universe, is the Supreme Being!”

The *Ved*, is not supposed to be an eternal Being, though sometimes dignified with such an epithet; because its being created by the Supreme Being is declared in the same Ved, thus: “All the texts, and parts of the Ved, were created:” and also in the 3d text of the Vedant, God is declared to be the cause of all the Veds:

The *void Space*, is not conceived to be the independent cause of the world, notwithstanding the following declaration of the Ved. † “The world proceeds from the void Space;” for the Ved again declares, “By the Supreme Being the void space was produced.” And the ‡ Vedant says: “As the Supreme Being is evidently declared, in the Ved, to be the cause of the void Space, Air, and Fire; neither of them can be supposed to be the independent cause of the universe.”

Neither is *Air* allowed to be the Lord of the Universe; although the Ved says in one instance, “In Air, every existing creature is

\* Taittareeu.

† Chhandoggu.

‡ 14th text, 4th Sec, 1st Chap.



absorbed ;” for the Ved again affirms, that, “ Breath, the intellectual power, all the internal and external senses, the void Space, Air, Light, Water, and the extensive Earth, proceed from the Supreme Being !” The\* Vedant also says : “ God is meant, by the following text of the Ved, as a Being more extensive than all the extension of Space ;” viz. “ *That* breath is greater than the extension of Space in all directions,” As it occurs in the Ved, after the discourse concerning common breath is concluded.”

*Light*, of whatever description, is not inferred to be the Lord of the Universe, from the following assertion of the Ved : “ The pure Light of all Lights is the Lord of all creatures ;” for the Ved again declares,† that, “ The sun and all others imitate God, and borrow their light from him ;” and the same declaration is found in the Vedant.‡

Neither can *Nature* be construed, by the following texts of the Ved, to be the independent cause of the world : viz. “ Man having known *that* Nature which is an eternal being, without a beginning or an end, is delivered from the grasp of death !” and, “ Nature operates herself !” because the Ved affirms, that § “ No Being is superior or equal to God !” and the Ved commands ;|| “ Know God alone !” and the Vedant¶ thus declares “ Nature is not the Creator of the world, not being represented so by the Ved, for it expressly says, “ God has by his sight created the Universe.” Nature is an insensible Being, she is, therefore, void of sight or intention, and consequently unable to create the regular world.\*\*

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\* 8th, 3rd, 1st.

§ Cuthu.

\*\* Cuthu.

† Moonduc.

|| Moonduc.

‡ 22nd, 3rd, 1st.

¶ 5th, 1st, 1st.



*Atoms*, are not supposed to be the cause of the world, notwithstanding the following declaration: “ This (Creator) is the most minute Being,” Because an atom is an insensible particle; and from the above authority it is proved, that no Being void of understanding can be the author of a System so skilfully arranged.

The *Soul* cannot be inferred, from the following texts, to be the Lord of the Universe, nor the independent Ruler of the intellectual powers; viz. “ The Soul being joined to the resplendent Being enjoys by itself,” “ God and the Soul enter the small void space of the heart,” because the Ved declares that “ He (God) resides in the Soul as it's Ruler,” and that “ The Soul, being joined to the gracious Being, enjoys happiness.”\* The Vedant also says “ The sentient soul is not understood to reside, as ruler in the Earth, because in both texts of the Ved it is differently declared from that Being, who rules the Earth:” viz. “ He (God) resides in the faculty of the understanding,” and “ He, who resides in the Soul,” &c.

No *God or Goddess of the Earth*, can be meant by the following text, as the ruler of the Earth, viz.† “ He who resides in the Earth, and is distinct from the Earth, and whom the Earth does not know,” &c. because the Ved affirms, that “ This (God alone) is the ruler of internal sense, and is the eternal Being,” and the same is asserted in the Vedant.‡

By the text which begins with the following sentence: viz. “ This is the Sun” and, by several other texts testifying the dignity of the Sun, he is not supposed to be the original cause of the universe, because the Ved declares, that§ “ He who resides in the Sun (as his Lord) is distinct from the Sun,” and the Vedant declares the same.||

\* 20th, 2nd, 1st.

§ Brih'darunnue

† Brih'darunnue.

|| 21st, 1st, 1st.

‡ 18th, 2nd, 1st,



In like manner none of the celestial Gods can be inferred from the various assertions of the Ved, respecting their deities respectively, to be the independent cause of the Universe; because the Ved repeatedly affirms, that “All the Veds prove nothing but the unity of the Supreme being.” By allowing the Divinity more than one Being, the following positive affirmations of the Ved, relative to the unity of God, become false and absurd:\* “God is indeed one, and has no second.” †“There is none but the Supreme Being possessed of universal knowledge.” ‡ He, who is without any figure and beyond the limit of description, is the Supreme Being.” “Appellations and figures of all kinds are innovations.” And from the authority of many other texts it is evident, that any Being that bears figure, and is subject to description, cannot be the eternal independent cause of the Universe.

The Veds not only call the celestial representations, Deities, but also in many instances give the divine epithet to the mind, diet, void space, quadruped animal, slaves, and flymen; as, “The Supreme Being is a quadruped animal in one place, and in another he is full of glory. The mind is the Supreme Being, it is to be worshipped,” “God is the letter *ku* as well as *khu*,” and “God is in the shape of slaves and that of flymen:” The Ved has allegorically represented God in the figure of the Universe, viz. § “Fire is his head, the Sun and the Moon are his two eyes,” &c. And also the Ved calls God the void space of the heart, and declares him to be smaller than the grain of paddy and barley: but from the foregoing quotations, neither any of the celestial Gods, nor any existing creature, should be considered the Lord of the Universe, because the || third chapter of the Vedant explains the reason for these secondary assertions, thus: “By these appellations of the Ved, which denote the diffusive spirit of the

\* Cuthu.

§ Mondue.

† Brih'darunnue.

|| 38th text, 2d sec.

‡ Chhandoggu.



Supreme Being equally over all creatures by means of extension, his omnipresence is established:" so the Ved says; "All that exists is indeed God,"\* i. e. nothing bears true existence excepting God, "and whatever we smell or taste is the Supreme Being;" i. e. the existence of whatever thing that appears to us, relies on the existence of God. It is indisputably evident that none of these metaphorical representations, which arise from the elevated style in which all the Veds are written, were designed to be viewed in any other light than mere allegory. Should individuals be acknowledged to be separate deities, there would be a necessity for acknowledging many independent creators of the world, which is directly contrary to common sense, and to the repeated authority of the Ved. † The Vedant also declares "That Being which is distinct from matter, and from those which are contained in matter, is not various, because he is declared by all the Veds to be one beyond description:" and it is again stated that, ‡ "The Ved has declared the Supreme Being to be mere understanding;" also in the 3d chapter is found that, "The Ved having at first explained the Supreme Being by different epithets, begins with the word *Uthu*, or now, and declares that "All descriptions which I have used to describe the Supreme Being, are incorrect," because he by no means can be described; and so it is stated in the sacred commentaries of the Ved."

The 14th text of the 2d sec. of the 3d chapter of the Vedant declares, "It being directly represented by the Ved, that the Supreme Being bears no figure nor form;" and the following texts of the Ved assert the same, viz. § "That true being was before all." "The Supreme being has no feet, but extends every where; has no hands, yet holds every thing; has no eyes, yet sees all that is; has no ears,

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\* Chhandoggu.

† 11th, 2nd, 3rd.

‡ 16th, 2d, 3d.

§ Chhandoggu.



yet hears every thing that passes." "His existence had no cause."  
 "He is the smallest of the small, and the greatest of the great; and yet is, in fact, neither small nor great!"

In answer to the following questions, viz. How can the Supreme Being be supposed to be distinct from, and above all, existing creatures; and at the same time omnipresent? How is it possible that he should be described by properties inconceivable by reason, as seeing without eye, and hearing without ear? To these questions the Vedant, in Chapter 2d replies, "In God are all sorts of power and splendour." And the following passages of the Ved also declare the same: \* "God is all powerful"; and, "It is by his Supremacy that he is in possession of all powers," i. e. what may be impossible for us, is not impossible for God, who is the Almighty, and the sole Regulator of the Universe.

Some celestial Gods have, in different instances, declared themselves to be the independent Deities, and also the object of worship; but these declarations were owing to their thoughts being abstracted from themselves and their being entirely absorbed in divine reflection. † The Vedant declares: "This exhortation of Indru (or the God of Atmosphere) respecting his divinity, to be indeed agreeable to the authorities of the Ved, that is, "Every one on having lost all self-consideration in consequence of being united with divine reflection may speak as assuming to be the Supreme Being; like Bamdev (a celebrated Brahmun) who, in consequence of such self-forgetfulness, declared himself to have created the Sun, and Munoo, the next person to Brahma." It is therefore optional with every one of the celestial Gods, as well as with every individual, to consider himself

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\* Shyetyashyutur.

† 30th, 1st, 1st.



as God, under this state of self-forgetfulness and unity with the divine reflection, as the Ved says, “you are that true Being,” (when you lose all self-consideration) and “O God, I am nothing but you.” The Sacred Commentators have made the same observation, viz. “I am nothing but true Being, and am pure Understanding, full of eternal happiness, and am by nature free from worldly effects.” But in consequence of this reflection, none of them can be acknowledged to be the Cause of the Universe, or the object of Adoration.

God is the efficient cause of the Universe, as a Potter is of Earthen Pots; and he is also the material cause of it, the same as the Earth is the material cause of the different Earthen Pots; or as a Rope at an inadvertent view, taken for a Snake, is the material cause of the conceived existence of the Snake, which appears to be true by the support of the real existence of the Rope. So says the Vedant,\* “God is the efficient cause of the Universe as well as the material cause thereof, (as a Spider of its web) as the Ved has positively declared, “That from a Knowledge of God alone, a knowledge of every existing thing proceeds.” Also the Ved compares the knowledge respecting the Supreme Being to a knowledge of the Earth and the knowledge respecting the different species existing in the Universe, to the knowledge of earthen pots, which declaration and comparison prove the unity between the Supreme Being and the universe;” and by the following declarations of the Ved, viz. “The Supreme Being has by his sole intention created the Universe,” it is evident that God is the wilful agent of all that can have existence.

As the Ved says, that the Supreme Being intended (at the time of Creation) to extend himself, it is evident that the Supreme Being is

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\* 23d, 8th, 1st.



the origin of all matter, and its various appearances, as the reflection of the Sun's meridian rays on sandy plains is the cause of the resemblance of an extended sea. The Ved says, "That all figures and their appellations are mere inventions, and that the Supreme Being alone is real existence," consequently things that bear figure and appellation, cannot be supposed the cause of the Universe.

The following texts of the Ved, viz: "Crishnu (the God of Preservation) is greater than all the celestial Gods, to whom the mind should be applied." "We all worship Muhadev (the God of Destruction)." "We adore the Sun." "I worship the most revered Buron (the God of the Sea)." "Dost thou worship me, says Air, who am the eternal and universal life." "Intellectual power is God, which should be adored;" "and Oodgheet (or a certain part of the Ved) should be worshipped." These as well as several other texts of the same nature, are not real commands to worship the persons and things above mentioned, but only direct those, who are unfortunately incapable of adoring the invisible Supreme Being, to apply their minds to any visible thing, rather than allow them to remain idle. The Vedant also states that \* "The declaration of the Ved "that those who worship the celestial Gods, are the food of such Gods," is an allegorical expression, and only means that they are comforts to the celestial Gods, as food is to mankind, for he who has no faith in the Supreme Being, is rendered subject to these Gods, the Ved affirms the same: viz. "He who worships any God, excepting the Supreme Being, and thinks that he is distinct and inferior to that God, knows nothing, and is considered as a domestic beast of these Gods." And the Vedant also asserts; viz. "The worship authorised by all the Veds is of one nature, as the directions for the worship of the only Supreme Being is invariably found in every part of the Ved; and the epithets the Supreme, and the omnipresent Being, &c. commonly imply God alone."†



The following passages of the Ved affirm, that God is the sole object of worship: viz.\* “ Adore God alone.” “ Know God alone; Give up all other discourse.” And the Vedant says, that† “ It is found in the Veds, “ That none but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped, nothing excepting him should be adored by a wise man.”

Moreover the Vedant declares that‡ “ Byas is of opinion, that the adoration of the Supreme Being is required of mankind, as well as of the celestial Gods, because the possibility of self-resignation to God is equally observed in both mankind and the celestial Deities.” § The Ved also states, that “ Of the celestial Gods, of the pious Brahmuns, and of men in general, that person, who understands and believes the Almighty Being, will be absorbed in him.” It is therefore concluded that the celestial Gods and mankind have an equal duty in divine worship; and besides it is proved from the following authority of the Ved, that any man who adores the Supreme Being, is adored by all the celestial Gods: viz. || “ All the celestial Gods worship him, who applies his mind to the Supreme Being.”

The Ved now illustrates the mode in which we should worship the Supreme Being; viz. “ To God we should approach, of him we should hear, of him we should think, and to him we should attempt to approximate.”¶ The Vedant also elucidates the subject thus; “ The three latter directions, in the above quoted text, are conducive to the first, viz. “ Approaching to God.” These three are in reality included in the first (as the direction for collecting fire in the worship of fire) for we cannot approach to God, without hearing and thinking of him, nor without attempting to make our approximation; and the last, viz. attempting to approximate to God, is required until we have approached him.” By hearing of God, is meant hearing his declara-

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\* Brehdarunnuc.

§ Brehdarunnuc.

† 67, 3d, 3d.

|| Chhandoggu.

‡ 26th, 3d, 1st.

¶ 47th, 4th, 3rd.



tions, which establish his unity, and by thinking of him, is meant thinking of the contents of his law, and by attempting to approximate to him, is meant attempting to apply our minds to that true Being on which the diffusive existence of the Universe relies, in order that by means of the constant practice of this attempt, we may approach to him.\* The Vedant states, that “Constant practice of devotion is necessary, it being represented so by the Ved:” and also adds, that “We should adore God till we approach to him, and even then not forsake his adoration, such authority being found in the Ved.”

The Vedant shews, that moral principle is a part of the adoration of God, viz. † “A command over our passions, and over the external senses of the body, and good acts, are declared by the Ved, to be indispensable in the mind’s approximation to God, they should therefore be strictly taken care of, and attended to, both previously and subsequently to such approximation to the Supreme Being;” i. e. we should not indulge our evil propensities, but should endeavour to have entire control over them. Reliance on, and self-resignation to, the only true Being, with an aversion to worldly considerations, are included in the good acts above alluded to.—The adoration of the Supreme Being produces eternal beatitude, as well as all desired advantages, as the Vedant declares.‡ It is the firm opinion of Byas, “that from devotion to God, all the desired consequences proceed;” and it is thus often represented by the Ved, “He, who is desirous of prosperity, should worship the Supreme Being.”§ “He who knows God thoroughly, adheres unto God.” “|| The Souls of the deceased forefathers of him, who adores the true Being alone, enjoy freedom, by his mere wish.” “All the celestial Gods worship him, who applies his mind to the Supreme Being,” and “He, who sincerely adores the Supreme Being, is exempted from further transmigration.”

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\* 1st, 1st, 4th.

† 27th, 4th, 3d.

‡ 1st, 4th, 3d.

§ Monduc.

|| Chhandoggu.



A pious householder is entitled to the adoration of God, equally with an Uti: \* The Vedant † says that “ A householder may be allowed the performance of all the ceremonies attached to the (Brahminical) religion, and also the fulfilling of the devotion of God: the fore-mentioned mode of worshipping the Supreme Being, therefore, is required of a householder possessed of moral principles.” And the Ved declares, “ That the celestial Gods, and householders of strong faith, and professional uttis, are alike.”

It is optional to those who have faith in God alone, to observe and attend to the rules and rites prescribed by the Ved, applicable to the different classes of Hindoos, and to their different religious orders respectively. But in case of the true Believers neglecting those rites, they are not liable to any blame whatever, as the Vedant says ‡ “ Before acquiring the true knowledge of God, it is proper for man to attend to the laws and rules laid down by the Ved, for different classes according to their different professions, because the Ved declares the performance of these rules to be the cause of the mind’s purification, and its faith in God; and compares it with a Saddle horse, which helps a man to arrive at the wish’d for goal.” And the Vedant also says, § that “ Man may acquire the true knowledge of God, even without observing the rules and rites prescribed by the Ved for each class of Hindoos, as it is found in the Ved, that many persons, who had neglected the performance of the Brahminical rites and ceremonies, owing to their perpetual attention to the adoration of the Supreme Being, acquired the true knowledge respecting the Deity.” || The Vedant again more clearly states, that “ It is equally found in the Ved, that some people, though they had their entire faith in God alone, yet performed both the worship of God and the cere-

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\* The highest among the four sects of Brahmuns, who, according to the religious order, are bound to forsake all worldly considerations, and to spend their time in the sole adoration of God.

† 28th, 4th, 3d.

‡ 36th, 4th, 3d.

§ 36th, 4th, 3d.

|| 9th, 4th, 3d.



monies prescribed by the Ved; and that some others neglected them, and merely worshipped God.” The following texts of the Ved fully explain the subject, viz. “Junuku (one of the noted devotees) had performed Yugnyu (or the adoration of the celestial Gods through fire) with the gift of a considerable sum of money, as a fee to the holy Brahmuns,” and “many learned true Believers never worshipped fire, nor any celestial God through fire.”

Notwithstanding it is optional with those, who have their faith in the only God, to attend to the prescribed ceremonies, or to neglect them entirely, the Vedant prefers the former to the latter, because the Ved says, that attendance to the religious ceremonies, conduces to the attainment of the Supreme Being.

Although the Ved says \* “That he, who has true faith in the omnipresent Supreme Being, may eat all that exists,” i. e. is not bound to enquire what is his food, or who prepares it; nevertheless the Vedant limits that authority thus:† “The above mentioned authority of the Ved for eating all sorts of food should only be observed at the time of distress, because it is found in the Ved, that Chacraunu (a celebrated Brahmun) ate the meat cooked by the elephant keepers during a famine.” It is concluded that he acted according to the above stated authority of the Ved, only at the time of distress.”

Devotion to the Supreme Being is not limited to any holy place or sacred country, as the Vedant says,‡ “In any place wherein the mind feels itself undisturbed, men should worship God; because no specific authority for the choice of any particular place of worship is found in the Ved” which declares, “In any place which renders the mind easy, man should adore God.”

\* Chhandoggu.

† 28th, 4th, 3d.

‡ 11th, 1st, 4th.

§ It is believed by the Brahmuns, that any one who dies while the Sun is south of the Equator cannot enjoy eternal beatitude.



It is of no consequence to those who have true belief in God, whether they die while the sun is in the north or south of the equator; as the Vedant declares,\* “That any one who has faith in the only God, dying even when the Sun may be South of the Equator, \* his Soul shall proceed from the body, through Sookhumna (a vein which, as the Brahmuns suppose, passes through the navel up to the brain) and approaches to the Supreme Being.” The Ved also positively asserts “That he, who in life was devoted to the Supreme Being, shall (after death) be absorbed in him, and again be neither liable to birth nor death, reduction, nor augmentation.”

The Ved begins and concludes with the three peculiar and mysterious epithets of God, viz. 1st ONG, 2d TUT, 3d SUT. The first of these signifies, “*That* Being, which preserves, destroys, and creates!” The second implies, “*That* only being, which is neither male nor female!” The third announces, “*The true being!*” These collective terms simply affirm, that, **ONE, UNKNOWN, TRUE BEING, IS THE CREATOR, PRESERVER, AND DESTROYER OF THE UNIVERSE!!!**

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\* 20th, 2nd, 4th.





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**TRANSLATION**

OF THE

**CENA UPANISHAD.**

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THESE

THESE



## INTRODUCTION.

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SINCE my publication of the abridgment of the *Vedanta*, containing an exposition of all the *Veds*, as given by the great VYAS, I have, for the purpose of illustrating and confirming the view that he has taken of them, translated into Bengalee, the principal chapters of the *Veds*, as being of unquestionable authority amongst all Hindoos. This work will, I trust, by explaining to my countrymen the real spirit of the Hindoo Scriptures, which is but the declaration of the unity of God, tend, in a great degree, to correct the erroneous conceptions, which have prevailed with regard to the doctrines they inculcate—It will also, I hope, tend to discriminate those parts of the *Veds*, which are to be interpreted in an allegorical sense, and consequently to correct those exceptionable practices, which not only deprive Hindoos in general of the common comforts\* of society, but also lead them frequently to self-destruction†, or to the sacrifice‡ of the lives of their friends and relations.

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\* A Hindoo of cast can only eat once between sun-rise and sun-set—can not eat dressed victuals in a boat or ship—nor clothed—nor in a tavern—nor any food that has been touched by a person of a different cast—nor, if interrupted while eating, can he resume his meal.

† As at Prayaga, Gunga Sagar, and under the wheels of the car of Jagannath.

‡ As for instance, persons whose recovery from sickness is supposed to be doubtful are carried to die on the banks of the Ganges. This is practised by the Hindoos of Bengal only, the cruelty of which affects, even Hindoos of Behar, Ilahabad, and all the Upper Provinces.



It is with no ordinary feeling of satisfaction that I have already seen many respectable persons of my countrymen, to the great disappointment of their interested spiritual guides, rise superior to their original prejudices, and enquire into the truths of religion. As many European gentlemen, especially those who interest themselves in the improvement of their fellow-creatures, may be gratified with a view of the doctrines of the original work, it appeared to me, that I might best contribute to that gratification, by translating a few chapters of the Ved into the English language, which I have accordingly done, and now submit them to their candid judgment—Such benevolent people will, perhaps, rise from a perusal of them, with the conviction, that in the most ancient times the inhabitants of this part of the globe (at least the more intelligent class) were not unacquainted with metaphysical subjects; that allegorical language, or description, was very frequently employed, to represent the attributes of the Creator, which were sometimes designated as independent existences; and that however suitable this method might be to the refined understandings of men of learning, it had the most mischievous effect, when literature and philosophy decayed, producing all those absurdities and idolatrous notions, which have checked, or rather destroyed, every mark of reason, and darkened every beam of understanding.

The Ved, from which all Hindoo literature is derived, is, in the opinion of the Hindoos, an inspired work, coeval with the existence of the world. It is devided into four parts, viz. Rig, Yajur, Sam, and At'harva; these are again divided into several branches, and these last are subdivided into chapters—It is the general characteristic of each Ved, that the primary chapters of each branch, treat of astronomy, medicine, arms and other arts and sciences. They also exhibit allegorical representations of the attributes\* of the Supreme Being,

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\* It is my intention to give (with the blessing of God) in my next publication, an account of the relation betwixt those attributes and the allegorical representations used to denote them.



by means of earthly objects, animate or inanimate, whose shapes or properties are analogous to the nature of those attributes, and pointing out the modes of their worship, immediately, or through the medium of fire. In the subsequent chapters, the unity of the Supreme Being, as the sole Ruler of the Universe, is plainly inculcated, and the mode of worshipping him particularly directed. The doctrine of a plurality of Gods and Goddesses laid down in the preceding chapters, is not only controverted, but reasons assigned for its introduction; for instance, that the worship of the Sun and Fire, together with the whole allegorical system, were only inculcated for the sake of those, whose limited understandings rendered them incapable of comprehending and adoring the invisible Supreme Being; so that such persons might not remain in a brutified state, destitute of all religious principles. Should this explanation given by the Ved itself, as well as by its celebrated commentator Vyas, not be allowed to reconcile those passages which are seemingly at variance with each other, as those, that declare the unity of the invisible Supreme Being, with others, which describe a plurality of independant visible Gods; the whole work must, I am afraid, not only be stripped of its authority, but looked upon as altogether unintelligible.

I have often lamented that in our general researches into theological truth, we are subjected to the conflict of many obstacles. When we look to the traditions of ancient nations, we often find them at variance with each other; and when discouraged by this circumstance, we appeal to reason as a surer guide, we soon find how incompetent it is, alone, to conduct us to the object of our pursuit—We often find, that instead of facilitating our endeavours, or clearing up our perplexities, it only serves to generate an universal doubt, incompatible with principles, on which our comfort and happiness mainly depend.—The best method perhaps is, neither to give ourselves up, exclusively, to the guidance of the one or the other; but by a proper use of



the lights furnished by both, endeavour to improve our intellectual and moral faculties, relying on the goodness of the Almighty Power, which alone enables us to attain that which we earnestly and diligently seek for.





# U P A N I S H A D

OF

## The Veda.

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1st. WHO is he [*asks a Pupil of his Spiritual Father*] under whose sole will the Intellectual Power makes its approach *to different objects*? Who is he, under whose authority, *Breath*, the primitive *power in the body*, makes its operation? Who is he, by whose direction, language is *regularly* pronounced? And who is that immaterial being, that applies vision and hearing *to their respective objects*?

2d. He [*answers the spiritual parent,*] who is the sense of the sense of hearing; the intellect of the intellect; the essential cause of language; the breath of breath; the sense of the sense of vision;—This is the being, *concerning whom you would enquire*:—Learned men having relinquished *the notion of self-independence, and self-consideration, from knowing the Supreme understanding to be the sole source of sense*, enjoy everlasting beatitude, after their departure from this world.

3d. Hence no vision can approach him; no language can describe him; no intellectual power can compass or determine him. We know nothing of how the Supreme Being should be explained: He is beyond all that is within the reach of comprehension, and also beyond nature, which is above conception. Our ancient *spiritual parents* have thus explained him to us.



4th. He alone, who has never been described by language, and who directs language *to its meaning*, is the Supreme Being; and not any specified thing which men worship: Know THOU this

5th. He alone, whom understanding cannot comprehend, and who, as said *by learned men*, knows the real nature of understanding, is the Supreme Being; and not any specified thing which men worship: Know THOU this

6th. He alone, whom no one can conceive by vision, and by whose superintendence every one perceives the objects of vision, is the Supreme Being; and not any specified thing which men worship: Know THOU this

7th. He alone, whom no one can hear through the sense of hearing, and who knows the real nature of the sense of hearing, is the Supreme Being; and not any specified thing which men worship: Know THOU this

8th. He alone, whom no one can perceive through the sense of smelling, and who applies the sense of smelling *to its objects*, is the Supreme Being; and not any specified thing which men worship: Know THOU this

9th. If you, [*continues the Spiritual Parent*,] *from what I have stated*, suppose *and say*, that “I know the Supreme Being thoroughly,” you, in truth, know very little of the Omnipresent Being; and any conception of that Being, which you limit to your powers of sense, is not only deficient, but also his description, which you extend to *the* bodies of the celestial Gods, is also imperfect; \* you, conse-

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\* The sum of the notion concerning the Supreme Being given in the Vedant, is, that he is *the soul of the universe*; and bears the same relation to all material extension, that a human soul does to the individual body with which it is connected.



quently, should enquire into the true knowledge of the Supreme Being. *To this the pupil replies :* “ I perceive that *at this moment* I begin to know God.”

10. “ Not that I suppose,” *continues he*, “ that I know God thoroughly, nor do I suppose that I do not know him at all ; as among us he, who knows the meaning of the above stated assertion, is possessed of the knowledge respecting God ;” viz. “ that I neither know him thoroughly, nor am entirely ignorant of him.”

11th. [*The Spiritual Father again resumes :*] He, who believes that he cannot comprehend God, *does* know him ; and he who believes that he can comprehend God, *does not* know him ; as men of perfect understanding acknowledge him to be beyond comprehension ; and men of imperfect understanding suppose him to be with in the reach of their simplest perception.

12th. The notion of the sensibility of bodily organs, *which are composed of insensible particles*, leads to the notion of God ; which notion alone is accurate, and tends to everlasting happiness ; man gains, by self-exertion, the power of acquiring knowledge respecting God, and through the same acquisition, he acquires eternal beatitude.

13th. Whatever person has, *according to the above stated doctrine*, known God, is really happy ; and whoever has not known him, is subjected to great misery : Learned men, having reflected on the Spirit of God extending over all moveable as well as immoveable creatures, after their departure from this world, are absorbed into the Supreme Being.

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*In a battle between the Celestial\* Gods and the Demons, God*

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\* In the Ukhaika it is said, that those powers of the Divinity, which produce agreeable effects and conduce to moral order and happiness, are represented under the figure of Celestial Gods, and



obtained victory over the latter, in favour of the former (*or properly speaking, God enabled the former to defeat the latter;*) But upon this victory being gained, the Celestial Gods acquired their respective dignities, and supposed that this victory and glory were entirely owing to themselves. The Omnipresent Being having known their boast, appeared to them *with an appearance beyond description.*

They could not know what adorable appearance it was: they *consequently*, said to Fire, *or properly speaking, the God of Fire*, “Discover thou, O God of Fire, what adorable appearance this is?” His reply was, “I shall.” He proceeded fast to that adorable appearance, which asked him, “Who art thou?” He then answered, “I am Fire, and I am the origin of the Ved, *that is, I am a well known personage.*” The Supreme Omnipotence upon Being thus replied to, asked him *again* “What power is in so celebrated a person as thou art?” He replied, “I can burn to ashes all that exists in the world.” The Supreme Being then having laid a straw before him, said to him, “Canst thou burn this straw?” The God of Fire approached the straw, but could not burn it, though he exerted all his power: He then *unsuccessfully* retired, and *told the others*, “I have been unable to discover what adorable appearance this is.” Now they all said to Wind (*or properly to the God of Wind*) “Discover thou, O God of Wind, what adorable appearance this is?” His reply was, “I shall.” He proceeded fast to that adorable appearance, which asked him, “Who art thou?” He then answered, “I am Wind, and I pervade unlimited space; *that is, I am a well-known personage.*” The Supreme Being *upon being* thus replied to, asked him *again*, “What power is in so celebrated a person as thou art?” He replied, “I can uphold all that exists in the world.” The Supreme Being then having laid

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those attributes; from which pain and misery flow, are called Demons and Step-Brothers of the former, with whom they are in a state of perpetual hostility.



a straw before him, said to him, "Canst thou uphold this straw?" The God of Wind approached the straw, but could not hold it up, though he exerted all his power. He then *unsuccessfully* retired, and *told the others*, "I have been unable to discover what adorable appearance this is." Now they all said to the God of Atmosphere. "Discover thou, O revered God of Atmosphere, what adorable appearance this is? His reply was, "I shall." He proceeded fast to that adorable appearance, which vanished from his view. He met at the same spot a woman, *the Goddess of Instruction*, arrayed in golden robes, in the shape of the most beautiful Uma.\* He asked her, "What was that adorable appearance?" She replied, "It was the Supreme Being, owing to whose victory you are all advanced to exaltation." The God of Atmosphere, from her instruction, knew that it was the Supreme Being *that had appeared to them*. He at first communicated that information to the Gods of Fire and of Wind. As the Gods of Fire, Wind, and Atmosphere, had approached to the adorable appearance, and had perceived it, and also as they had known, prior to the others, that it was indeed God *that appeared to them*, they seemed to be superior to the other Gods. As the God of Atmosphere had approached to the adorable appearance, and perceived it, and also as he knew, prior to *every one of them*, that it was God *that appeared to them*, he seemed not only superior to every other God, but also *for that reason* exalted above the Gods of Fire and Wind.

The foregoing is a divine figurative representation of the Supreme Being; meaning, that in one instance he shines at once *over all the universe*, like the illumination of lightning; and in another, that he disappears as quick as the twinkling of an eye. Again, it is represented *of the Supreme Being*, that *pure* mind conceives, that it approaches to him as nearly as possible: Through the same pure mind, the pious

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\* The wife of Siva.



man thinks of him, and consequently application of the mind to him is repeatedly used. That God, *who alone in reality has no resemblance, and to whom the mind cannot approach*, is adorable by all living creatures; he is therefore called "*adorable*." He should, *accordingly to the prescribed manner*, be worshipped. All creatures revere the person who knows God, in the manner thus described. The pupil *now says*, "Tell me, O Spiritual Father, The Upanishad, or the principal part of the Ved?" The *Spiritual Father makes this answer*, "I have told you the principal part of the Ved, which relates to God alone, and, indeed told you the Upanishad, of which austere devotion, control over the senses, performance of religious rites, and the remaining parts of the Ved, as well as those Sciences, that are derived from the Veds, are *only* the feet; and whose altar and support is truth." He, who understands it as thus described, having relieved himself from sin, acquires eternal and unchangeable beatitude.









